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AMAZING HEROES



KEVIN
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SWIMSUIT
issue!

Q. What do you get when Phillip Marlow meets Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm and La Cag Aux Folles? A. Close Encounters of the Askew-Kind...

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Illustrated by
Colleen Doran

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"As much as I admire Phillip Marlow and Spenser, and Sherlock Holmes, I'm afraid I'd have a lot more in common with Lar Malone on her first week on the job confronting practical jokes, non-fork, and attack on her wardrobe, first to meet two of the small matter of murder.... The added bonus, since this is a novel of the genre, is the artwork of Colleen Doran. Here she is given every opportunity to showcase her skills and does it fine effect. So...can the next *Fortune's Friends* come out next week?" —Tony Randi

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No. 115 AMAZING HEROES April 15

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OUR COVER: Kevin Rowland for *Rolling Stone* parodies his rendition of Wonder Woman on the beach. Wonder Woman is © 1986 DC Comics Inc. and is a registered trademark of the Justice League of America. How about this?

"Great fun."

"An interesting, time-temporal romp with a couple of thieves and con artists, fine professional art (featuring) Bianca, a succulent young lady with a taste for the bizarre — the business being her fellow thief, Fred, an often little awes!"

— AMAZING HEROES



Free can go looking for every day — do you really want to find the real you can't find? Or worse yet? Find and know that's your destiny surrounding one character, rather than what's really happening! The continuity department has recommended an excellent plot — don't let it go! — get real! As the story moves on, find Fred and Bianca how to decide just how serious their actions really are!

"...very humorous."

— HARLAN ELLISON

"It's a lot of fun, with some digs at current comics people along with some consideration of the consequences of time travel."

"There are several inside jokes for comic readers, and the dialogue is bright and sparkling."

— Don Thompson
COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE

X-THIEVES #2



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AMAZING HEROES



1987



BILL SIENKIEWICZ offers a stylish, traditional form of the 1980s. His current project for Shadow, a small, dark, and good in a post-punk style.

A hip and stylish piece from Shadow in design. JOHN H. SHAWCO is, however, Shadow's and its own. Much for Fall's "Winter Special," coming soon.





LAYS: MIKE SPILL gives us a little more of Mike Blackmore than we ever see in Jon Soble's *Paradise*. Right? SUPREME HANDED, who is collaborating with Gail on his new Green Arrow series, offers *Timepacer*, a character concept of her own.



Timepacer

MARK PHOSTER gives us this shot of the victorious, *STRAWHAT* 1988 scripter (in both *Comic Interview*).



Stealing a few days R&R in an empty time-share unit. The security chief (Chad's "Chumprint" in the corner) was sure he recognized us from somewhere!

A collection of characters from Lee Nakashima's *Fusion*, expertly rendered by co-artist LEE A. GOWLING. If Dr. Wadsworth looked better in a swimsuit, he'd be there too.



PHIL FORD and EDUARD REIZ's delirious *Dynamo* Joe and his comrades at the beach. Well, they probably go there sometime.



Another one from PGL FOGLE, this one starring his inmate Buck Bone, currently on display in a full-color graphic novel from Daring Detective.



182 "Harder to pronounce than Sordidus" BOONTHANAGI offers the reader a full-on M.L.E.R.A. (from Comics Insider's series).





Alright, so I'm not exactly a natural pro... it's still by MIKE HARRIS and JOSEF RUBINSTEIN, done for a village boutique a while back. The small picture is FRANK THORPE's film, coming soon to a theatre shop near you.



Heaven Help The Guilty

GOLDEN
DRAGON



Coming to May 1967



BLACK FRIDAY offers up the tribute
to the women of Will Eisner's *The
Spirit*. Can you name them all?



APRIL 10, 1967

27

FREE HEMLOCK again. Can you name these two heroes? No! They didn't use to have spigots on their foreheads.



FREE
HEMLOCK



Surf's up! This Pouter Man and Wacky Wives, by WILLY DAVIS. Bottoms torn, from the pages of GOOD OLDS, by DAROL LAT.



GUESS WHO'S THE GUY?
NO LONGER!



Special feature: The new Arnie and Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jack Bauer do, and look like no other in the history of the movie industry. They are the new version of the movie.





THESE THREE MEN
AND WOMEN ARE
A STRONG TEAM
OF ARTISTS WHO
ARE WORKING TO
RECREATE THE
ART OF THE
BEACH. THE
ARTISTS ARE
THEY ARE
THEY ARE
THEY ARE



THEY ARE
THEY ARE
THEY ARE
THEY ARE





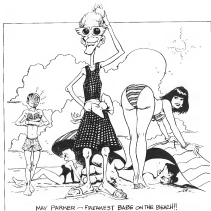
Art istore JOHN ROMÁN JR. is currently writing and drawing "Rama" for Dark Horse Presents; Sam has two regular characters from that series, Rama and Mike Rose.



Chicago co-creator BILL MULLIGAN returns to his series for one last lingering look at his characters.



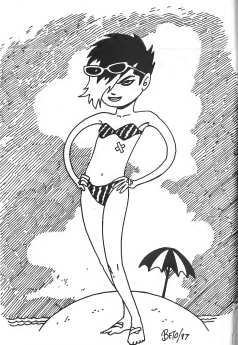
Brand-winning SP writer JOAN RIVERS' WOODS gives her interpretation of *Barbarella* (from J.M. DeMatteis and Jim J. Nazzari/Moonraker)



MAY PARKER — FINEST BARE ON THE BEACH!!

Cutie (below) from the *Robo* series, has been riding in the wings for some time (barely) for 20 years now. Some people don't know where to cut it. ARTY SCOTT (HEADSTOCK) and PAUL (BRIEF), and GARY (KID) PBL, the team of *Robo* (Bare) of *Robo*.





And you probably thought GUARDI REINOLDBEZ was going to do Luke Hope—it's a Greek Edgemon, currently on display in Love and Rockets Book 2.



ITCHY G'CONNELLY, under the stylish moniker of Ginger Fox, currently on display in his and Mike Baron's graphic novel from Comix, *Coming soon, the Ginger Fox miniseries...*

Swimsuits in OZ



(f)(a) (b)(6)(b)(7)(c) is using an identity concept on his 6y series--
a domain that seems to agree with him, so we not see here.



The inclusion of the minute TERN (TernA) by the firm, says Bill Eng, an old chum of mine, is not to reveal too much about the firm's modest expansion.



"HI FELLAS-- HOW DO YOU LIKE MY SWIMSUIT?"



From the pages of the late, lamented *Elmer Fudd*, *Howl*, *Michael Hayes*, *Teddy Q*, and the matelotee *Love Street*, rendered by co-creator AJG (SEASIDE).

AMERICAN HUMOR 1978



Lasagna, from the pages of *MAR*. *MAR*'s outrageous *Greaser* parody. (No, not a parody of *Greaser*, but... you know what I mean.)



© 2000 Blackwell Science Ltd *Journal of Internal Medicine* 247: 101–107

His Koolhaas & Klibans on the black sands of KALABINA.



Remember when STEVE LEVAZQUE was the regular actor on "Hawaii Five-O"? Well, he does (hence this witty model pic of the featured one relaxing in the water at his short movie career. (Play back, no "back" jokes in this segment)

But, WE LOSTED people and into the realm of the realm of The Emerald, just for us.

with a



M O R N I N G S T A R

**TODAY IS THE
FIRST DAY OF THE
REST OF HIS LIFE**

**A DAY TO COME FACE
TO FACE WITH DEATH**



GREEN ARROW

THE LONGBOW HUNTERS

WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED BY MIKE GRELL WITH LURENE HAINES
PRINTED BY JULIA LACQUEMENT

A 3 BOOK PRESTIGE FORMAT SERIES, COMING IN MAY



NEED HELP? We provide this breath-taking rendition of Green Arrow, seen in monthly and sometimes bi-monthly in *Kirkman's Comics*, *The Cat*, *Genes*, written by Kate Murray.



© 1997 *Green Arrow*

JONNY QUEST



MARK WHEATLEY and MARK WHEATLEY, now the regular writers on Columbia's *Jonny Quest*, offer up a throw to the Nitro Circus' ADD. (Panel, p. 16)

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MARK WHEATLEY and MARK WHEATLEY, now the regular writers on Columbia's *Jonny Quest*, offer up a throw to the Nitro Circus' ADD. (Panel, p. 16)

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APRIL 15, 1987

We go Pogo with three traditions of great members. First, what Betty's great, great, great, T.T. (She's a lesbian). TEMPLETON sends Albert the Alligator for his under misadventures, sometimes Templeton exclaims, ANTHONY VAN BRUGGEN controls who's a master Porgy, and CARL (the only one) (GAGG) gives Nashville Porgy a hint.



The POG Brothers, soon to get their own comic, from Porgography Studio, who in a rare parental moment on the beach, courtesy of creator JIM POGIE.



APRIL 15, 1987

BARD (top) RAYNE) FAUSON offers this rendition of Marvel's new, bearded Thor wearing a lo



THE
INTERNATIONAL
PUBLISHING EVENT OF 1987.
Over six million copies sold!

THE ULTIMATE
SAMURAI ADVENTURE
COMES TO AMERICA!



LONE WOLF and CUB

A sophisticated epic of
Japan's violent past!

The legendary work of
KAZUO KOIKE and GOSEKI KOJIMA.

Cover and introduction by
FRANK MILLER.



BEGINNING IN MAY.

FIRST
PUBLISHING
NEW YORK, NY 10017

Special funny-animal page: While a KITTEN makes Captain Jack look silly, CHUCK PILLER reminds us of his old Comic Reader series: Bull! Cow! pig! right, and JOSHUA Unkissed from up Curry Runny and her remains (at distance reveal) particularly sticky (bottom)



THE PRANKSTON
DUMBLEY A
SOLLEY
CHOW
ON THE
MOON



RICHARD HOWELL's new feature: Paula-Paul has just returned to camp in shape around the country. Here she is snuggling with her partner and her nose, they're not kidding



Mrs. S. Vixen and Rich Babbitt present the provocative story of Acacia from Epcot, the book they are currently doing for Eclipse Comics.



Acacia

ANALYZING HENDER #115

THE ULTIMATE 3-D MOVIE

SHOWING AT
DISNEYLAND AND WALT DISNEY WORLD EPCOT CENTER
GEORGE LUCAS

PRESENTS
A 3-D MUSICAL MOTION PICTURE SPACE ADVENTURE
DIRECTED BY FRANCIS COPPOLA
STARRING MICHAEL JACKSON as CAPTAIN EO

NOW BECOMES
THE ULTIMATE
3-D COMIC BOOK
EXPERIENCE



ART BY **TOM YEATES**

FROM THE LEADER IN 3-D





Don Rosa's COVER GALLERY

Someone's cover means are nothing new to publishing *Amazing Heroes*; did not originate the idea, not did Spurr (illustrator), in fact, I have a no good authority that the concept of selling a publication on the merits of a so-called cover guy is as far back as John C. Dillinger's third printing of the 1930s. Whatever the case, the idea is certainly not new to comic books, which I am going to demonstrate with my first model issue of the "Cover Gallery."

It would have been almost cheating to deal with "best" comics or "best fiction" comics... these types had no real comic cover every other issue. And all those bright and colorful covers of the late '40s and early '50s had no real meaning and little value. I found no shortage of unusual comic covers, if, and finally, I found a comic, but I wish I could have discovered more super hero comic covers for you super hero fan club members. That's why about a dozen "Superman Family" comics with the character in a variety of poses (about 1000) had to show these folks a variety of poses, but I found various to other hero comics with unusual covers (right).

Here's just a sample of the history of comic book covers and covers from my vast, whirling collection.
—DON ROSA

COVER GALLERY



COVER GALLERY



COVER GALLERY



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The twisted genius of Alan Moore, the evil cunning of Alan Davis and the amazing extortion powers of Titan Books have been conspired under extreme duress to produce (against everyone's better judgement) D.R. AND QUINCH'S TOTALLY AWESOME GUIDE TO LIFE. An acid sketched portrait of alienated youth.

The most dangerous comic album to surface in the UK is now threatening the national security of the U.S.A.!! If you don't buy this book, we'll burn your house down

READ WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

I wonder to think any children may read this

Dr. Spock

The what? Is there to be world peace

Michael Conforto

I laughed to hard I almost punched the author

Harold Pinter

\$9.95/CAN \$14.95

Cover by Alan Davis



Available NOW from your local comicbook store

G COMICS in review

MY TEN FAVORITE COMICS OF 1986

By R.A. Jones

Just what you thought it was safe to read *Comics in Review* again. R.A. Jones returns!

But don't get screaming into the night—it's only for one issue, but long enough to give the other books a breather from the too back-breaking schedule. To give lists that break, the gang at Panegyrics was kind enough to ask me to step into the breach for a moment.

And what funny-scented world of concernment did they get to lure me back to these pages? Why, they told me they were sure I would spell off the words correctly and get the words in on time (they, that sure list would like much—but it's high praise indeed coming from folks who consider me to have been dead for the past three years!).

So that as it were, I'm happy to be spending a few pages once again bowing my opinions out to all of you. I've missed you—here, come you never roll or waver! Because of this, I intend to offer you my top 10 of my Top Ten Comics of the year.

So in past years, they've been a whole lotta shakin' going on in my list of personal favorites, with several titles falling out of grace faster than a finger shot, having left their covers. Some fell extremely, but not so emphatically as in the past. These have taken precious plumes in quality (American *Playboy* has just to mention from the depths of Howard Chaplin, Jan Sabo now reads as if created Mike Gail has lost all interest in it, and *Daughters*—after the return of Miller

and Macdonald's most—quickly disappeared into incomprehensible psychic babble).

Each year, naturally enough, lists lots of books for my concern into my Top Ten. In all honesty, however, I didn't find 1986 to be exactly brimming with fine titles. More covers were being published than at any other time in the industry's history, but most of them were highly forgettable.

The independent publishers, once hailed as the saviors of the business, seemed choked in 1986 (not that exploding the last nearly uncountable independent for anything that contained a black-and-white animal parody to create white, prove the last), appears to be moving in much downward only. Mighty Marvel could think of no better way to celebrate its 35th Anniversary than by releasing its New Universe (which—most of which are not to be expected as an average issue of *Iron Fists*). DC was the big winner, thanks in large part to the return of several Marvel superheroes.

So it reads, I'm going to try to reduce this reviewing to my list as the Top Ten comics. I've never been as pessimistic as to believe that I was qualified to carry on the editor who should determine which books alone were that applications (you would expect my opinions to carry extra-curious weight if I was so qualified).

Indeed, it is a lot of list but comes that (in the moment) are my personal favorites, books that—often for totally ridiculous reasons—give me a large helping of enjoyment and

entertainment. The kind of book that I look forward to each and every issue. I happen to believe that a few of them do deserve consideration as being among the best offered today, but amongst truly with them are books that are so much that just food for the mind—leading to new ideas, but totally satisfying.

It would also like to make mention of a few titles that aren't in my Top Ten. There that I've listed the last to be *Iron Fists*, *Comics* and *Love and Rockets*. While none of these titles merit the truly arbitrary and subjective criteria necessary to make my Top Ten, I would recommend that every serious fan of comics at least give these books a try. *Iron Fists* (Angelo Amico's *Iron Fists* delivers some comic books, there are *Iron Fists* (Crawford), in my opinion, one of the best comic books in the industry, and *Iron Fists* (Herriman *Love and Rockets*) has proven himself capable of creating some of the most beautiful comic book art in the industry. These books are not favorites of mine, but I think you are it is possible to sample as well as a variety of comics as possible, even if it's only the one issue.

As an Honorary Member of my Top Ten, I would like to give a nod to *Daughters* (the first issue of *Daughters*), particularly I do not read these books on a regular basis (for the simple reason that, while presented with an excellent opportunity to "go home," I prefer not to be involved in these dances (which is a hard dance of childhood).

I have read enough of these to know that they are indeed as good as I remember, and I recommend them highly. The next time your list sends you to the comic shop to pick up the latest issue of *Daughters*, I'll bring back a copy of *Daughters* (which is a hard dance of childhood).

And now, having heard you to hear, and to share you to share, I'll bring back a copy of *Daughters* (which is a hard dance of childhood).

10. *Iron Fists*

Remembering, and I met as a result of *Iron Fists* is just so happened that my first review of the first issue was just just about the time the book really took off in popularity. Creative Series *Iron Fists* (which is a hard dance of childhood) was a close link between the two series. Being the honest and forthright individual that I am, I have always chosen to be honest



ALL NEW STORIES!
IN COLOR!



THE UNTAMED

by CHUCK 'AIRBOY' DIXON

and ENRIQUE ROMERO

THE NEW ECLIPSE COMICS

who had been the older (Nancy's first and greatest love. In true comic tradition, Daisy arranged to die and resurrect Mickey.

In an equally venerable scripting tradition, issue #6 was then used to let the reader catch his breath and to introduce the various plot details that would carry the series through the next several issues. Then, scribe Chuck Dixon began to explore what has become the most fascinating aspect of the strip.

Mickey had not only been held captive, she had actually been kept at a state of suspended animation for decades. Thus, she obviously had not aged. Upon awakening, she introduced Daisy to his father. Her husband, Daisy is most definitely attracted to the woman, but then that her anonymous attention are not directed at him as much as at the ghost of his past.

Issue #7 launched the next four-part story, which carried the series to the end of the year. There, they were reunited by his father's aviation company, making powerful enemies in the process. Mickey met Victor Heller, a man who had emerged from a Nazi gas chamber as a survivor! And we met a characterful robot, who was once actually the man known as the Iron Ace.

As this synopsis indicates, Airboy is a series that speeds along on fast, paced, dynamic action. That is one of the secrets of its success. The classic movement never lets up—over the quiet moments are filled with an underlying sense of urgency, as much the same way as did the best of the old movie serials. Danger strikes from so many directions, events happen with such rapidity, that you have little time to think—only to snap.

I am especially appreciative of the fact that Chuck Dixon does not allow the series to completely outgrow its origin, as is the case in the too many comics today. He fully understands the value of the occasional comic touch, and handles them with aplomb. And those of us who grew up at a time when Saturday mornings were filled with those starring real people rather than cartoons find the revelation that the current Airboy's mother was the niece of *The King*.

From the very beginning, Airboy has also benefited from superb art. Editor Tim Yuen, Assistant Editor Tim Yuen, helped get the series off to a winning start. Since issue #3, the bulk of the penciling duties have been handled by Stan Wack, who I have long felt was a vastly under-

used comic previously relegated to doing back-up stories at DC.

Likewise, the covers have been graced with artwork by the likes of Paul Cheney, John Voldine, and Dave Stevens—whose steady cover illustration for issue #5 I elsewhere dubbed as the year's "The Most Likely To Make Fantastic Western Spin In His Genre."

The one disappointment has been the recent change in color, with an accompanying rise in price. We get no more of Airboy than in the past, and the new \$2.00 back-up series has due for failed to generate any sales. I would have preferred a smaller price hike and a continuation of the original format.

Airboy is, needless to say, not a groundbreaking step forward in cloning comics to cut cost. What it is is a reasonably good action series with decent likable characters and terrific artwork.

That may not make it the "best" of anything—but it's enough to make it one of my favorite new books.

K. Cherry

All right—here's the selection that I probably shunned for my no-class and used the other half screaming after my blood. But what

the hell—it won't be the first time I will have to wear a dagger around the waist of the *Man of Steel* mini-series!

This second series was chosen for my list because of the non-Franchise, pseudo-mystical genre which makes each story a microcosmic examination of every subtle nuance that makes Americans so the Fascist personification.

And if you believe that—I've got some more copies of *Killers Joe*. It's here to sell ya.

The real reason I put Cherry as my Top Ten is because this book is depraved, disgusting, pornographic, inhumane and utterly lacking in any redeeming value.

I love it.

Male members of the audience may remember a little mural that made the rounds during your junior high school days—it went known as my day in a "Spume hole." These were crude little comic books, usually no more than eight pages in length, that depicted well-known cartoon characters in pornographic situations. You know "How speech peaked up Popeye's performance" or "Why Lucy won't let Scooby kiss her."

Well, in a manner of speaking, that's what Cherry is. Period.

Cherry: Drought to make Francis Vertham and Ed Messer spin in their graves (that, we know I don't read yet, but...)



These ideas serve as a strong selling point for the book. I certainly find a greater *Archie* comic for the first time in years, discovering it to be just as bland as it seemed to me when I was ten years old. Seeing those cartoons, delightfully wholesome-some things even in such a raucous context as Chevy Chase the Man

The book started under the title *Cherry Popstar*, but dropped the surname with the final issue. One can only assume that the Popstar people took offense. Good. We all need to be offended every once in a while. It's good for the soul. And in its short run, *Cherry* has probably managed to offend even more people than has *Gary Green*.

The 11th issue, at least the first copy I was able to obtain just a few months past, bears a 1982 copyright, but the individual stories within all date back to the '70s. The lead-off tale parodies Chaucer—who usually reminds me of Willylinsky from the old *Joan* and the *Phoenician* comics—accepting a ride from a folk who looks suspiciously like Jughoslavians. In the best teenage tradition, Chaucer exchanges several lines for the chance to drive the boy's hot rod, with unbecomingly results.

That premiere show also introduced us to "Rampage!" and his friends Gorge and Junkies! You get the idea. This story and one other were produced by other artists, while the Cherry stories were supplied by Larry Sells, who assumed complete responsibility for the entire contents of the next two issues.

The second issue proved to be the best in the series thus far on *Waka*, presented us with take-offs on rain, flora, haiku, bubble pears, eggs, Japanese insects and elegiacs. Keeping in the mode of the *Anches*, he even displayed haikus and puns on pages. The book made cover was filled with more, versions of the central book ads that were provided in the 50s—offering for sale such items as a Bay Through Make-up Kit, and a Fake Coliculus. But

In the third and even more rare, Well-through Cherry—look out at our belated Attorney General and his Moral Commission. The back cover bears a beautifully-colored depiction of Cherry as the Statue of Liberty. Beaming down on her is a Nazi godhead, a Hitler himself—decided out in a pair of Mickey Mouse ears.

Inside, Cherry writes us that "if you happen to go out and commit some heinous violent act or crime" (the reading this, well, it's not my fault). This book is only "bits of ink on paper" it will not "cannot harm you." Anyway, you don't have to read it!

Is this a normal comic book? Cherry herself poses that very question on the inner of page 41. The answer, without a doubt, is "yes!" but I don't believe it to be so in any mind-oriented way. Rather, Mills is simply purchasing the air bag of false morality that surrounds our sexual mores, willing us to lighten on

Cherry is naturally salty, and usually overripe. It is also ripe and hard core in its depiction of the sex act—which means you may have a hard time finding it. Ask your local comic shop owner to order it for you. If that fails, you might try

Send no money now! We'll bill you later.
 Send this ad to the source and
 writing to:
 Last Gang,
 P.O. Box 202
 Berkeley, CA 94705

Obviously, this book is not for everybody. Some will say it shouldn't be for anybody. But if you're looking for something different, something totally off the wall—then Cherry gets my nod.

● Greater Wealth

This book, *Demagogues*, seems tailored almost to have warmed its way into the consciousness quite unopposedly. I had never read a single installment of the five opening chapters that appeared in the back of *Singapore Man* last year. Donald Simpson's striking illustrations compelled me to purchase the first issue when the shop was giving its own book—three issues of which have appeared to date. These—

In *Monster Works*, Don Simpson's ma-

After only one I was convinced this would be an outstanding series. I think now he confirmed the validity of this particular bit of intuition.

Bonnie Wright follows the exploits of Jenny Woodless, an Earth woman forced by circumstances to seek a new life aboard the huge space station Chrysalis. Teaming with her brother, she operates a sort of space taxi service. One of her passengers is Oliver Goodson, the man who designed Chrysalis 50 years earlier. He befriends the young woman, becomes her lover, but doesn't tell her the station will collide with a planet within the year.

Meanwhile, two dragons have escaped from Earth. *Shingoro Densetsu* and *Goji* reveal carry a secret they are determined to keep from the Yotaka authorities. They manage to reach Chrysalis, but must find someone from there to be the relay for info to one of the backwater Border Worlds. As you might expect, the word they choose for their escape attempt is that coined by *Star Trek*.

available to pass final judgment on the merits of the story presented in *Borderlands*. At this point, it shows no signs of deviating perceptibly from what is a fairly well-trod comic-fantasy path. It is well-scripted, though, with Serpico illustrating large blocks of almost novel-like narrative with most conventional comic-book captions and word balloons.

But, perhaps more than any other book in my Top Ten, it is the sheer power of the illustrations that carries this title away from the common herd.

Most often, cosmic body scenes focus upon scenes wedded to *Star Wars*—all glass and glory. The only glitz found here is the occasional ray of light reflecting from the sea.



tion of a trademark before. Simpson's speech steps don't look like special effects—but like blocks of fully functional machinery. Speech acts are both of psychology, as designed by Descartes. This is a world of juxtaposed light and shadow—with the shadow seeming always to hold the advantage. It is a tough world, broken down by the hurricane of war.

And much the same can be said of the strip's main protagonist, Jerry Woodbury, a quite possibly the most fully developed female character in comics today. She is a capable, feisty woman, grown tougher as evidenced by her jet. (Not attractive in the classical sense, she is what men in the earlier years would have called handsome. Not overly sexy, but by far very handsome.) She possesses of a deep, underlying femininity that is to be considered a source.

In a field overflowing with spottily clean stylists and those still patting themselves after Kirby or Adams, Donald Lipschutz stands out as one of the few who seems to clearly understand the meaning and importance of mood. If he shows any signs of being influenced by his style, it is from a period that predates the Marvel Age. His rugged, rand, adrift caricatured figures remind me of the early work of Harold Lloyd. Most Dislike. Response captures you with the crusty, oily, and disheveled.

Boulder World is still relatively young and perhaps just groping for Swamp Dog. Open here in —but still an excellent book.

a diversion in some ways, but it is already a first example of how really good a more serious book can be.

E. G. Thompson

It was inevitable that the title which owned the #1 spot as my new one for the past two years would eventually fall from that position—and it has—which is not to say that it is no longer an excellent book. For *Twelve Things*, the young linguist with the understanding of the open "American Culture" says it was here, in the double-speak 30th issue, that the first hints of disappointment in the book began to rise. Minutes of someone build up excitement, something more than the "novelization" that there must be a balance between good and evil. Besides the fact that I don't believe this to be true, I also felt it to be a rather nice and clichéd effort to have come from the book.

The next three values showed a real improvement. Abby Cadabby, who had been photographed in the context of Swamp Thing, was arrested on the medical charge of having committed a "crime against nature." Fleeing from Louisiana, Abby fell into the hands of the authorities in Gotham City. Swamp Thing was less than pleased when he learned of this.

Swamp Thing's encounter with the Biotus, and the rage of Chthon, were portrayed in powerful fashion. That issue's climax, which featured the trading characters' apparent death, also marked a departure in

quality, with everything else seeming somewhat anticlimatic. After all—how do you top the neighborhood strategy achieved in the previous?

The last of the list is the five movies since that point have both the two actors directed to Swann. Thing's square on the planet Kato, though even here there was a bit of disappointment. One of Alan Brown's strengths as a writer has always been his ability to take odd, established characters, group what makes them work as a team over, and exploit that to the fullest. With Adam Strongie and crew, however, Minsky instead seemed to discuss traditional roots in favor of creating new images based on his own desires. While I don't think he succeeded well in doing this, he was able to tell a story that was both thrilling and, in the end, cute.

It seems fairly certain that Moon will not remain on the book much longer, and indeed the time may be right for him to move on to other projects. What he accomplished during his tenure is incredible. He took a role languishing in the doldrums, heading for cancellation, and molded it into an awe-inspiring blend of multi-themed science fiction and dark horror. In the process, he "remade" Swamp Thing from being just another dark monster into an elemental godhead of the

The answer to that should prove quite interesting. And while Missou herself seems to have come to a bit of an impasse, her mastery of the written word is still more than adequate to hold *Jump, They* in the Top 10s.

4. Applications

It was a troubled year indeed for the nation's yet unborn stars. Floods and missed deadlines brought havoc with its schedule, causing an unfortunate dilution of its dramatic impact.

Following this quick delay, *name #1* finally brought the initial storyline to a conclusion of sorts, and *name #2* firmly attached the series to its path of (perhaps remarkably) graph ic results. First, Mike Moran has two fingers eaten by "Mikewinding." Then, upon changing to his Mikewinding persona, he claims two



grounds together with such force that their heads literally explode. A third guard dies when Blackman accidentally throws a finger through the man's chest. A fourth is torn back from inside Alan's M&M's machine. Dr. Gauguin, a man plugging in a fiery death.

Lightning near FL, not fixed a carbon character—constituting a horrendously altered one—promote—ripping in to tell against the documenary of 1965 Hawaii when it came in providing full on some point of inquiry. One-coldown such documenary by announcing that dual line printers have forced them to fill the remainder of the book with Blackman's reports from the '60s. For he is from now to point out that this display of "horror" takes place on page two—rather than on the cover of the book.

These same, said 98, with an already much-dubbed-difficult as sequence. Unlike many other readers and especially nervous readers, I was not offended by the apparent study of justice. I was, however, somewhat bored by it, disappointed that simpler Alan Moore would engage in such seemingly unnecessary self-indulgence, and frustrated by the fact that it seemed to do little more than pad a story I had been impatiently awaiting for months.

I also felt that much of the criticism would have been avoided if the footnoting scene had been illustrated by anyone other than Rick March (with the description being the member in error). Some, Blackman's March, while being a very effective artist, draws in a style that I believe many readers would characterize as being "off" in a result, this point really beautiful sequence looked more like pages from a horror comic, and to such, detracted from the startling drama—where his minimalist style appears.

Things were much more on track the next issue as Moore continued to slowly unfold the saga of Blackman's bizarre offspring and direct storytelling came in to the detriment of many more will take.

Like I said, it was this that has any year for this story that began with such promise. Yet, through struggle of the previous remain for me to continue to count it among my favorites. It was with this series that Alan Moore began to show as that man, he could be brought into the world and given of the great things. Through it, he began to explore the possibilities too long hidden under stereotypes and labels.

If only it was possible to graft



Blackman continues to explore and explore the super-hero stereotype.

elements of real life and meta-fiction into an art form that essentially consists of meta-fictional power fantasies. Moore is the writer to do it, and Blackman's arguments his first-catch-all but flawed—attempts to do so. If comics could only have half a dozen writers of Moore's caliber, they could probably tell only by choice to authors comparable in size to those of the Golden Age, but would deserve the respect of those outside the industry as well.

As with Swamp Thing, it is possible that Blackman may soon be leaving Blackman. If he is not, he will likely prove to be the greatest writer to be followed by John Fekken, then the book will probably remain one of the strongest on the stands.

3. Best Graphic
This graphic featuring various elements included in my Top 50 list for no other reason than it contained so much interest outside the normal sphere of comics and made the use of the world aware that comic art's latest exploits (despite of massive misanthropism, the same or more could be said for John Byrne's *Men of Steel*, but that story was so basic I wouldn't care to place it on a Top 50 list).

For this, Jack Knight worked to the same reason as the best of Frank Miller's other successful ventures have worked—because in the main he presented his fictional world on a violent, almost unhuman level. It is only when he depicts them as the personified that his series seems to



Jack Knight: One of the best, but flawed, art.

However, re-reading should be necessary for this story. Jack Knight gave us a 55-year-old Batman, drawn out of an unseen by the general notion that he has been in for more than four decades. The first three issues of the series, I feel, can stand as better examples of comic excellence. To be sure, there were problems—deplorable coloring under Moore's direction, almost all calling "Flying bodies" and falling roofs. Batman never killed anyone—but these were overshadowed by the story-drawn-outstanding power that made comic an increasing experience.

Fortunately, they were also enough to carry the series—for the first year seemed to completely fill gaps. The nuclear winter seemed nothing more than a consequence to point Miller the kind of ending he wanted. And—to my greatest surprise—he actually gave us a Superman who was every bit as good as the one Byrne likes to present as the true face of Steel. Examples? It never occurred to Supes to simply accept the no-idea that created Batman to stay it out with him but not vice versa.

The ending was extremely well-crafted. After plotting several false clues that Batman was a dying man, Miller used the background device of a drug-induced false death. In my mind, only the knowledge of super-drug will death would have, and that Batman's otherwise unseen devotion to the code of the new Robin—accepting

a totally untested little girl only because he knew someone must carry on in defense of his beloved Gotham Island. In the end, Batman is reduced to the status of a survivor, growing half-crazed despite for life in post-holocaust America.

I will say that I found the new Robin to be a delightful character—far better than the young boy currently using the name. The simple point where the unfathomably long superman with wings but no wings is a problem.

And while I found the series to be absolutely somewhat disappointing, the parts that clicked did so with a vengeance. Whether his skills must be as writer or artist, Frank Miller must be given credit for his efforts to expose and expand his personal creative horizon. Miller does not push the strings of your emotions, but rather, drives his fingers into your belly, squeezing your guts for all he's worth. He plays on emotions, and it is an emotion that has remained better than anyone else in the field today.

Not this I find this without commending Lynn Varley for her outstanding contribution to the artistic excellence of the series. Many examples of her dynamic coloring of this may be cited, but the one I feel best illustrates the depth of her role is one of more subtlety: it comes in panel two of page 32, in issue #9, in the form of Batman's "mascot" streaked face.

Used in perfect illustration and as a device, said Jack Knight has to rank in one of the best comic series of 1986.

2. Moonshadow
In the past couple months, the boy named Moonshadow ended his voyage of seeking. The true pay

is that, apparently, he has learned to take the journey with him.

Over the course of the final six issues of this series, Moonshadow was shown to shed his desired innocence and innocence, to learn the world without benefit of institutional places.

His freedom had increased when a possible woman he had met, an old friend, told him that he was given a new chance at happiness, a chance of his beloved life in danger but him to forsake his new life. He managed to never let, but found him to be devastated physically and mentally.

There is was inevitable. Moon was introduced to the state of new-being instead, not in joy and sorrow in the 18 GT (disappearance of Time). This link was caused knowledge was mostly interrupted when he had his own captured by an old and vindictive enemy.

Here again Moon lost his autonomy, when he picked up a gun and shot his captor. His journey of discovery was drawing to a close.

It ended in the place where I, where he watched people who should have to hope watching in golden circles, making the spiritual being they traveled would trust their suffering.

And on the planet his end.

The incredible, shaggy, pretty's dream was a logical conclusion, I suppose. He was a most demystifying organism—a creature devoted to nothing was the selfish satisfaction of his own base needs, and desire. In a manner of speaking, he was then by Moonshadow, for it was what he had come to know the way that he must remain, for being wanted to exist, so did he.

Not did Moon come through the journey unchanged. He had begun

Moonshadow: A haunting, touching tale.



as a total assassin—ignorance of the realities of life outside the sterile corridors of his first home, deluded by hopelessly romanticized notions of love and clarity.

By 30, the delusions were sucked from him. His conscience, both sexual and meta-physical, did not remain silent. He was forced to come back into the realities of a life where murder and hatred are always with us. Finally, atrociously, he accepted these flaws in the prisoner's existence he had sworn against himself.

But if the creature was at last torn away from him, he did not allow it to be exploited by the implacable class of cynicism. While accepting the fact that the world is filled with evil, he also learned that one need not succumb to it. He seemed to walk the tightrope between the smothering darkness of illusion and the blinding light of unbridled optimism.

As chapter 316, DeChateau says through Moore, "in his narrative he has communicated a secret we already know. Such has become of much of DeChateau's current writing. The telling difference is that here he did not ponder the oratorical as with it, but rather let it flow naturally from the ordinary."

Likewise, J. J. Math (and those who helped him) made this book a visual feast of ideas seen in the art form.

Moore's theme is a haunting, timeless tale—a manifestation of human violence and the belief that love and morality are not the stuff of dreams... but of reality.

I strongly recommend that you pick up the entire set of 12 issues, and sit in the graphic novel's study in.

4. *Blackhawk*

With *Blackhawk*, the super-hero book of age—the book I consider to be the finest in 1986.

It tells a story set in a place not quite our own, where America was and was in Viet Nam, and Richard Moore is enjoying a third term as President. It is a world where, with few exceptions, super-heroes have been banned by law for nearly a decade.

One who failed to accept this edict is the man called Rorschach. He is investigating the brutal murder of one of his fellow masked men. Inevitably, he becomes involved in a conspiracy as about a second hero is nearly shot. A third, Dr. Manhattan, falls victim to a plot which sends him into exile on Mars.



The best of the best: You knew it all along, didn't you?

The latest and greatest find comparisons on a global scale. Dr. Manhattan, possessed of nearly god-like powers, had served as a deterrent in our national conflict by keeping the balance of power firmly in America's favor. With his departure, the tension grew bold enough to invade Afghanistan, threat towards Pakistan, and mass drive troops in Eastern Europe. Nuclear confrontation with the United States seems at best no more than a heartbeat away. And the clock keeps counting down.

Scripter Alan Moore's use of time and clockwork as a recurring motif, plus and most in this series is doubly apparent. Like a master craftsman, he has meticulously designed every rag and gear of this work to mesh with precision accuracy. A single panel in issue 46 might be in impenetrable work rooms in issue 47—and you can't help but believe that Moore knew in months as almost exactly where and when that panel would be used. Know the very words he would place within its borders.

A final, recently expressed growing dissatisfaction with the series, complaining that he will find no other readers who are going on, not how any of this could be interpreted. I think there are two reasons for this. First, he looks at the story lines for as being right simply of a comic book series—when around it should be viewed as the first right chapter of a novel. From then, it is natural that few stories are yet forthcoming. Second, if one reads down and reads the issues collectively, as I have just done, the pattern of this complex mystery becomes clearer. I suggest everyone do this, either

now or at the series' conclusion (it is wise to do this with other series as well, personally, particularly those that appear sporadically).

In this series, Alan Moore has taken the most step beyond the work he began in *Watchmen*. More than any other series I have experienced, *Blackhawk* seems a convincing picture of what life would be like if real men and women were to hold on to their rage and evil and set out to make the world right. No doubt they would exemplify both the best and worst that mankind has to offer. And Moore has done a masterful job of showing every hero's whole world—utterly telling a story of gripping suspense.

Adding him to this is Dave Gibbons, who is responding to the challenge by seeing out what is perhaps the finest art of his career. He has always exhibited the technique—and now, at last, he has added the soul blended with the effective coloring of John Higgins, the artwork done the story period.

Blackhawk is sweeping in its scope, bold in concept and execution, disturbingly insightful, and immensely gripping. It represents, possibly the finest best in American comics ever done by any of the best that its creators and artists (DC) can do.

And it is one tale I would be willing to argue deserves to be labeled the best.

So there you have it—my personal selection for the Top Ten Comics of 1986. Thanks for letting me come back ahead to voice my opinion. And now, folks, you won't have to put up with me again... at least not until next year.

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